

Will the broadcast flag interfere with consumers ability to make copies of DTV content for their personal use, either on personal video recorders or removable media?

The threat of increased difficulty for consumers in making personal use copies of DTV content will only further slow the acceptance of DTV. Most consumers already see no need to transition to DTV, seeing too little added value to justify the cost. Added complexities and the specter of big corporate control and limitations on copying, as well as any additional cost, will slow acceptance of DTV further. Impact of broadcasters withholding DTV content would be small, since very few consumers see added value in DTV, and program content is expected to be the same in analog or digital modes.

Would the digital flag interfere with consumers ability to send DTV content across networks, such as home digital networks connecting digital set top boxes, digital recorders, digital servers and digital display devices?

The digital flag presents a wilderness of technical problems relating to where controls would be invoked. The small minority of consumers who see value in DTV are also the more sophisticated users and leading adopters of new technology. This means the imposition of "digital flag" controls would have significantly greater negative impact on their ability to use and develop new technology, and could hinder the adoption of DTV by this key consumer group.

Would a broadcast flag requirement limit the development of future equipment providing consumers with new options?

Development of new consumer options for receiving and handling broadcast content would inevitably be inhibited.

What will be the cost impact, if any, that a broadcast flag requirement would have on consumer electronics equipment?

The imposition of the broadcast flag system on the consumer and consumer electronics related industry would open a Pandora's box of issues not currently understood, but which would certainly result in significant cost increases to broadcasters, the electronics industry, and consumers. To the extent that this would hinder the development and acceptance of new technologies, it is clearly undesirable.

Other Comments:

The rights of the public should never be superseded by those of a small commercial interest group. Claims of damage from piracy by broadcast and content industry groups are highly suspect and may be hugely overstated. The damage to the public good that would be caused by the adoption of such initiatives as "digital flag" is too great, and the FCC should protect the public in such matters rather than make rules that cater to the profits of small commercial interest groups.
can not be calculated